



Celebrating a decade of smiles

Children in Ayrshire and Arran have been benefitting from improved oral health for more than a decade. The Childsmile Programme, which works to reduce inequalities in oral health and ensure every child has access to dental services, has just celebrated its tenth birthday.

And data from the last ten years shows that there have been considerable improvements in the health of our children's teeth. Emma Hall-Scullin, Consultant in Dental Public Health, explains: "In 2005, just over 47 per cent of five year olds in Ayrshire and Arran had no obvious decay in their first teeth. In 2016, this figure had increased to 73 per cent.

"Similarly, in 2005, just over half of 11 year olds had no obvious dental decay - in 2015, 78 per cent of the same age group showed no sign of decay.

"We are delighted with this progress. Good oral health in childhood means healthy teeth and gums throughout life. Childsmile is working to ensure all children have the best possible start."

Childsmile is a Scotland-wide initiative which provides integrated dental care for children during their early years. The main components of Childsmile are:

- **Childsmile Core** – Provides every child with dental packs and a free-flow feeder cup. The Toothbrushing Programme offers free, daily, supervised tooth brushing in every nursery and some primary schools. More than 19,000 children currently participate in the Toothbrushing Programme in Ayrshire and Arran.
- **Childsmile Practice** – Introduced to families by their Health Visitor, who reinforces key oral health messages and the benefits of registering their child with a dentist.

Media information

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Health Visitors can help families to find a local Childsmile dental practice for their child.

- **Childsmile Nursery** and **Childsmile Primary School** – Delivers a range of preventive care interventions for every child aged three and up. Childsmile teams provide fluoride varnish applications to children's teeth twice a year within identified nurseries and schools.

Emma adds: "Even with these great improvements in children's oral health, challenges remain. There are persistent oral health inequalities, with children from more deprived areas suffering tooth decay more often than children from less deprived areas – Childsmile continues to address these inequalities."

If you would like more information about the Childsmile Programme, please visit the website at www.child-smile.org or contact the local Childsmile Co-ordinator on 01292 513 998.

Ends

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Notes to editors:

Figures from National Dental Inspection Programme [NDIP] Reports 2005, 2006 and 2015.

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